

E L E G Y

O N

CAPTAIN COOK.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A N O D E T O T H E S U N.

BY MISS SEWARD.

2

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR J. DODSLEY, IN PALL-MALL.

M.DCC.LXXX.

[Price 1s. 6d.]

Y G E L E

O N

CAPTAIN COOK.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,



AN ODE THE SUN.

BY MISS SEWARD.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. DODSLEY, IN PALE-MALL.

M.DCC.LXXX.

[Price 1s. 6d.]

A N E L E G Y
O N C A P T A I N C O O K.

SORROWING, the Nine beneath yon blasted yew
Shed the bright drops of Pity's holy dew ;
Mute are their tuneful tongues, extinct their fires ;
Yet not in silence sleep their silver lyres ;
To the bleak gale they vibrate sad and slow,
In deep accordance to a Nation's woe.

Ye, who ere while for Cook's illustrious brow
Pluck'd the green laurel, and the oaken bough,
Hung the gay garlands on the trophied oars,
And pour'd his fame along a thousand shores,
Strike the slow death-bell !—weave the sacred verse,
And strew the cypress o'er his honor'd hearth ;
In sad procession wander round the shrine,
And weep him mortal, whom ye sung divine !

Say first, what Pow'r inspir'd his dauntless breast
 With scorn of danger, and inglorious rest,
 To quit imperial London's gorgeous plains,
 Where, rob'd in thousand tints, bright Pleasure reigns ;
 In cups of summer-ice her nectar pours,
 And twines, 'mid wint'ry snows, her roseate bow'rs ?
 Where Beauty moves with undulating grace,
 Calls the sweet blush to wanton o'er her face,
 On each fond Youth her soft artillery tries,
 Aims her light smile, and rolls her frolic eyes ?

What Pow'r inspir'd his dauntless breast to brave
 The scorch'd Equator, and th' Antarctic wave ?
 Climes, where fierce suns in cloudless ardors shine,
 And pour the dazzling deluge round the Line ;
 The realms of frost, where icy mountains rise,
 'Mid the pale summer of the polar skies ?—
 IT WAS HUMANITY !—on coasts unknown,
 The shiv'ring natives of the frozen zone,
 And the swart Indian, as he faintly strays
 “ Where Cancer reddens in the solar blaze,”

She bade him seek ;—on each inclement shore
 Plant the rich seeds of her exhaustless store ;
 Unite the savage hearts, and hostile hands,
 In the firm compact of her gentle bands ;
 Strew her soft comforts o'er the barren plain,
 Sing her sweet lays, and consecrate her fane.

IT WAS HUMANITY !—O Nymph divine !
 I see thy light step print the burning Line !
 There thy bright eye the dubious pilot guides,
 The faint oar struggling with the scalding tides.—
 On as thou lead'st the bold, the glorious prow,
 Mild, and more mild, the sloping sun-beams glow ;
 Now weak and pale the lessen'd lustres play,
 As round th' horizon rolls the timid day ;
 Barb'd with the fleeted snow, the driving hail,
 Rush the fierce arrows of the polar gale ;
 And thro' the dim, unvaried, ling'ring hours,
 Wide o'er the waves incumbent horror low'rs.

From

From the rude summit of yon frozen steep,
 Contrasting Glory gilds the dreary deep !
 Lo !---deck'd with vermeil youth and beamy grace,
 Hope in her step, and gladness in her face,
 Light on the icy rock, with outstretch'd hands,
 The Goddess of the new Columbus stands.
 Round her bright head the plummy * Peterels soar,
 Blue as her robe, that sweeps the frozen shore ;
 Glows her soft cheek, as vernal mornings fair,
 And warm as summer-suns her golden hair ;
 O'er the hoar waste her radiant glances stream,
 And courage kindles in their magic beam.
 She points the ship it's mazy path, to thread
 † The floating fragments of the frozen bed.

* *Peterels soar*.—The peterel is a bird found in the frozen seas ; its neck and tail are white, and its wings of a bright blue.

† *The floating fragments*.—" In the course of the last twenty-four hours, we passed through several fields of broken ice ; they were in general narrow, but of considerable extent. In one part the pieces of ice were so close, that the ship had much difficulty to *thread* them."

While

While o'er the deep, in many a dreadful form,
 The giant Danger howls along the storm,
 Furling the * iron sails with numbed hands,
 Firm on the deck the great Adventurer stands;
 Round glitt'ring mountains hears the billows rave,
 And the † vast ruin thunder on the wave.—
 Appall'd he hears!—but checks the rising sigh,
 And turns on his firm band a glitt'ning eye.—
 Not for himself the sighs unbidden break,
 Amid the terrors of the icy wreck;
 Not for himself starts the impassion'd tear,
 Congealing as it falls;—nor pain, nor fear,
 Nor Death's dread darts, impede the great design,
 Till ‡ Nature draws the circumscribing line.

* *Furling the iron sails.*—"Our sails and rigging were so frozen, that they seemed plates of iron."

† *And the vast ruin.*—The breaking of one of these immense mountains of ice, and the prodigious noise it made, is particularly described in Cook's second voyage to the south Pole.

‡ *Till Nature, &c.*—"After running four leagues this course, with the ice on our starboard side, we found ourselves quite embay'd, the ice extending from north-north-east, round by the west and south, to east, in one compact body; the weather was tolerably clear, yet we could see no end to it."

Huge

Huge rocks of ice th' arrested ship embay,
 And bar the gallant Wanderer's dangerous way.—
 His eye regretful marks the Goddess turn
 Th' assiduous prow from its relentless bourn.

And now antarctic Zealand's drear domain
 Frowns, and o'erhangs th' inhospitable main.
 On it's chill beach this dove of human-kind
 For his long-wand'ring foot short rest shall find,
 Bear to the coast the * olive-branch in vain,
 And quit on wearied wing the hostile plain.—
 With jealous low'r the frowning natives view
 The stately vessel, and th' advent'rous crew ;
 Nor fear the brave, nor emulate the good,
 But scowl with savage thirst of human blood !

And yet there were, who in this iron clime
 Soar'd o'er the herd on Virtue's wing sublime ;

* *The olive-branch.*—" To carry a green branch in the hand on landing, is a pacific signal, universally understood by all the islanders in the South Seas."

Rever'd the stranger-guest, and smiling strove
 To soothe his stay with hospitable love ;
 Fann'd in full confidence the friendly flame,
 Join'd plighted hands, and * name-exchang'd for name.
 To these the Hero leads † his living store,
 And pours new wonders on th' uncultur'd shore ;
 The filky fleece, fair fruit, and golden grain ;
 And future herds and harvests bless the plain:
 O'er the green foil his Kids exulting play,
 And sounds his clarion loud the Bird of day ;
 The downy Goose her ruffled bosom laves,
 Trims her white wing, and wantons in the waves ;
 Stern moves the Bull along th' affrighted shores,
 And countless nations tremble as he roars.

* *And name-exchang'd.*—The exchange of names is a pledge of amity among these islanders, and was frequently proposed by them to Captain Cook and his people ; so also is the joining noses.

† *His living store.*—Captain Cook left various kinds of animals upon this coast, together with garden-seeds, &c. The Zealanders had hitherto subsisted upon fish, and such coarse vegetables as their climate produced ; and this want of better provision, it is supposed, induced them to the horrid practice of eating human flesh.

So when the Daughter of eternal Jove,
 And Ocean's God; to bless their Athens strove,
 The massy trident with gigantic force
 Cleaves the firm earth—and gives the stately Horse;
 He paws the ground, impatient of the rein,
 Shakes his high front, and thunders o'er the plain.
 Then Wisdom's Goddess plants the embryo-seed,
 And bids new foliage shade the sultry mead;
 'Mid the pale green the tawny olives shine,
 And famish'd thousands bless the hand divine.

Now the warm solstice o'er the shining bay,
 Darts from the north its mild meridian ray;
 Again the Chief invokes the rising gale,
 And spreads again in desert seas the sail;
 O'er dangerous shoals his steady steerage keeps,
 O'er* walls of coral, ambush'd in the deeps;

* *Walls of coral.*—The coral rocks are described as rising perpendicularly from the greatest depths of the ocean, inasmuch that the sounding-line could not reach their bottom; and yet they were but just covered with water.—These rocks are now found to be fabricated by sea-insects.

Strong

Strong Labour's hands the crackling cordage twine,
And * sleepless Patience heaves the sounding-line.

On a lone beach a † rock-built temple stands,
Stupendous pile ! unwrought by mortal hands ;
Sublime the ponderous turrets rise in air,
And the wide roof basaltic columns bear ;
Thro' the long aisles the murm'ring tempests blow,
And Ocean chides his dashing waves below.
From this fair fane, along the silver sands,
Two sister-virgins wave their snowy hands ;
First ‡ gentle Flora—round her smiling brow
Leaves of new forms, and flow'rs uncultur'd glow ;

* *And sleepless Patience.*—" We had now passed several months with a man constantly in the chains heaving the lead."

† *A rock-built temple.*—" On one part of this isle there was a solitary rock, rising on the coast with arched cavities, like a majestic temple."

‡ *First gentle Flora.*—Flora is the Goddess of modern Botany, and Fauna of modern Zoology : hence the pupils of Linnæus call their books *Flora Anglica*—*Fauna Danica*, &c.—" The Flora of one of these islands contain'd thirty new plants."

Thin folds of *vegetable silk, behind,
 Shade her white neck, and wanton in the wind;
 Strange sweets, where'er she turns, perfume the glades,
 And fruits unnam'd adorn the bending shades.
 —Next Fauna treads, in youthful beauty's pride,
 A playful † Kangroo bounding by her side;
 Around the Nymph her beauteous ‡ Pois display
 Their varied plumes, and trill the dulcet lay;
 A § Giant-bat, with leathern wings outspread,
 Umbrella light, hangs quiv'ring o'er her head.

* *Vegetable silk*.—In New-Zealand is a flag of which the natives make their nets and cordage. The fibres of this vegetable are longer and stronger than our hemp and flax, and some, manufactured in London, is as white and glossy as fine silk. This valuable vegetable will probably grow in our climate.

† *A playful Kangroo*.—The kangroo is an animal peculiar to those climates. It is perpetually jumping along on its hind legs, its fore legs being too short to be used in the manner of other quadrupeds.

‡ *Beauteous Pois*.—"The poi-bird, common in those countries, has feathers of a fine mazarine blue, except those of the neck, which are of a beautiful silver grey; and two or three short white ones, which are in the pinion-joint of the wing. Under its throat hang two little tufts of curled white feathers, called its *poies*, which, being the Otaheitean word for ear-rings, occasioned our giving that name to the bird; which is not more remarkable for the beauty of its plumage, than for the exquisite melody of its note."

§ *A Giant-bat*.—The bats which Captain Cook saw in some of these countries were of incredible dimensions, measuring three feet and an half in breadth, when their wings were extended.

As

As o'er the cliff her graceful step she bends,
 On glitt'ring wing her insect-train attends.
 With diamond-eye her scaly tribes survey
 Their Goddess-nymph, and gambol in the spray.

With earnest gaze the still, enamour'd crew
 Mark the fair forms; and, as they pass, pursue;
 But round the steepy rocks, and dangerous strand,
 Rolls* the white surf, and shipwreck guards the land.

So, when of old, Sicilian shores along,
 Enchanting Syrens trill'd th' alluring song,
 Bound to the mast the charm'd Ulysses hears,
 And drinks the sweet tones with insatiate ears;
 Strains the strong cords, upbraids the prosp'rous gale,
 And sighs, as Wisdom spreads the flying sail.

* *Rolls the white surf.*—"As we passed this island, many of its trees had an unusual appearance, and the richness of the vegetation much invited our naturalists to land, but their earnest wishes were in vain, from the dangerous reefs and the violence of the surfs."

Now

Now leads **HUMANITY** the destin'd way,
 Where all the Loves in **Otaheite** stray.
 To bid the Arts disclose their wondrous powers,
 To bid the Virtues consecrate the bow'rs,
 She gives her Hero to its blooming plain.—
 Nor has he wander'd, has he bled in vain!
 His lips persuasive charm th' uncultur'd youth,
 Teach Wisdom's lore, and point the path of Truth.
 See! * chasten'd love in softer glances flows,
 See! with new fires parental duty glows.

Thou smiling Eden of the southern wave,
 Could not, alas! thy grateful wishes save
 That angel-goodness, which had bless'd thy plain?—
 Ah! vain thy gratitude, thy wishes vain!
 On a far distant, and remorseless shore,
 Where human fiends their dire libations pour;
 Where treachery, hov'ring o'er the blasted heath,
 Poises with ghastly smile the darts of death,

* *Chasten'd love.*—Captain Cook observes, in his second voyage, that the women of Otaheite were grown more modest, and that the barbarous practice of destroying their children was lessened.

Pierc'd by their venom'd points, your favorite bleeds,
And on his limbs the lust of hunger feeds !

Thus when, of old, the Muse-born Orpheus bore
Fair Arts and Virtues to the Thracian shore ;
Struck with sweet energy the warbling wire,
And pour'd persuasion from th' immortal lyre ;
As soften'd brutes, the waving woods among,
Bow'd their meek heads, and listen'd to the song ;
Near, and more near, with rage and tumult loud,
Round the bold bard th' inebriate maniacs crowd. —
Red on th' ungrateful foil his life-blood swims,
And Fiends and Furies tear his quiv'ring limbs !

Gay Eden of the south, thy tribute pay,
And raise, in pomp of woe, thy Cook's * Morai !

* *Morai*.—The *Morai* is a kind of funeral altar, which the people of Otaheite raise to the memory of their deceased friends. They bring to it a daily tribute of fruits, flowers, and the plumage of birds. The chief mourner wanders around it in a state of apparent distraction, shrieking furiously, and striking at intervals a shark's tooth into her head. All people fly her, as she aims at wounding not only herself, but others.

Bid mild Omiah bring his choicest stores,
 The juicy fruits, and the luxuriant flow'rs;
 Bring the bright plumes, that drink the torrid ray,
 And strew each lavish spoil on Cook's Morai!

Come, Oberea, hapless fair-one! come,
 With piercing shrieks bewail thy Hero's doom!—
 She comes!—she gazes round with dire survey!—
 Oh! fly the mourner on her frantic way.
 See! see! the pointed ivory wounds that head,
 Where late the Loves impurpled roses spread;
 Now stain'd with gore, her raven-tresses flow,
 In ruthless negligence of mad'ning woe;
 Loud she laments!—and long the Nymph shall stray
 With wild unequal step round Cook's Morai!

But ah!—aloft on Albion's rocky steep,
 That frowns incumbent o'er the boiling deep,
 Solicitous, and sad, a softer form
 Eyes the lone flood, and deprecates the storm.—

Ill-fated matron!---for, alas! in vain
 Thy eager glances wander o'er the main!---
 'Tis the vex'd billows, that insurgent rave,
 Their white foam silvers yonder distant wave,
 'Tis not his sails!---thy husband comes no more!
 His bones now whiten an accursed shore!---
 Retire,---for hark! the sea-gull shrieking soars,
 The lurid atmosphere portentous low'rs;
 Night's fullen spirit groans in ev'ry gale,
 And o'er the waters draws the darkling veil,
 Sighs in thy hair, and chills thy throbbing breast---
 Go, wretched mourner!---weep thy griefs to rest!

Yet, tho' through life is lost each fond delight,
 Tho' set thy earthly fun in dreary night,
 Oh! raise thy thoughts to yonder starry plain,
 And own thy sorrow selfish, weak, and vain;
 Since, while Britannia, to his virtues just,
 Twines the bright wreath, and rears th' immortal bust;

C

While

While on each wind of heav'n his fame shall rise,
 In endless incense to the smiling skies ;
 THE ATTENDANT POWER, that bade his sails expand,
 And waft her blessings to each barren land,
 Now raptur'd bears him to th' immortal plains,
 Where Mercy hails him with congenial strains ;
 Where soars, on Joy's white plume, his spirit free,
 And angels choir him, while he waits for THEE.

O D E T O T H E S U N.

Prize P O E M at Batheaston, April 1779.

I.

L O R D of the Planets! in their course
 Thro' the long tracts of never-ceasing day,
 Who to their orbs, with matchless force,
 Bendest their rapid, wild, reluctant way;
 Tho' midst the vast and glitt'ring maze
 Of countless worlds, that round thee blaze,
 Small, dim, and cold, our little Earth appears,
 Thy life-enkindling light she shares:
 From the chill Pole's far-shining mountains frore,
 To sandy Afric's sultry shore,
 Wide o'er her plains thy living lustres stream,
 In Lapland's long pale day, and swart Numidia's beam.

II.

For her, with delegated right,
 Thy virgin-sister in thy absence shines,
 Throws her soft robe of snowy light
 O'er fullen Night's opaque and shadowy shrines;
 Thy watchful centinel, she reigns
 Controuler of the watry plains,
 Onward her silver arm the Ocean guides,
 Or dashes back the impetuous tides.
 But thou, on the green wave's capacious bed,
 Hast light, and life, and gladness shed,
 Thro' liquid mountains, as they roll,
 Darting the beauteous beam, the vivifying soul,

III.

That paints the shell's meand'ring mould,
 Or spots the twinkling fin with gold;
 That gives the diamond's eye to blaze
 With all thy bright and arrowy rays.---
 Low in the billowy hold,

Where

Where the mighty whales are straying,
 And the burnish'd dolphins playing,
 There, with tremulous light, thou charmest
 Nations basking in thy gleam;
 And e'en there thy earth thou warmest
 With thy mild prolific beam :
 From the dwarf coral, with his vermeil horns,
 Or sea-moss, matted round her briny caves,
 To the broad oak, that Albion's cliff adorns,
 And bears her sons triumphant o'er the waves ;
 Each stem, root, leaf, fair fruit, and flowret bright,
 Lustre and fragrance drink from thy all-cheering light.

IV.

Remov'd from its more ardent ray,
 In grassy Albion's deep umbrageous vales,
 Thou bid'st them bloom in soft array,
 And breathe sweet incense on her vernal gales.
 Thy red Morn blushes on her shores,
 And liquid gems profusely pours ;

Thy

Thy gay Noon glows with unoppressive beams,
 And glitters on her winding streams;
 Thy modest Evening draws the deep'ning shades
 O'er her green hills, and bowery glades,
 Till the fair Months, with faded charms,
 Shrink in the chilly grasp of Winter's icy arms.

V.

But this highly-favoured year,
 From thee with gifts peculiar sprung;
 At thy command Autumna fair
 Her golden vest o'er shiv'ring Winter flung;
 And bid him his pale ling'ring hours
 Gaily deck with fragrant flow'rs;
 For his hoar brow matur'd the Violet wreath,
 From his wan lip bid Pleasure breathe;
 No more he blasts the plain, or warps the tide,
 But throws his iron rod aside,
 His soften'd gale serenely blows,
 Till with Italia's charms hybernal Albion glows.

VI.

Great Sun ! like thee, with effluence bright,
 Rich source of intellectual light,
 Benign Humanity appears,
 From Sorrow shielding, and from Cares,
 And Poverty's sad blight.
 Genius hails thee, Pow'r propitious !
 Ripening in thy smile auspicious ;
 Light divine ! thy bounty streaming
 * Confecrates this destin'd ground,
 On the vase thy lustre beaming,
 " Inspiration breathes around."
 The nobler pleasures of the moral world
 From this internal radiance gently flow,
 As when, oh Sun ! thy summer-beams are hurl'd,
 And Air, Earth, Ocean, all exulting glow.—
 Great Sun ! with plenty ever blest these plains,
 Where Genius strikes the Lyre, and soft-eyed Mercy
 reigns !

* It must be remembered, that this is a charitable as well as a poetic institution.

Great Sun! like thee, with effulgent light,
 Rich source of intellectual light,
 Benign Humanity appears,
 From sorrow shielding, and from Care,
 And Poverty's sad plight.
 Genius hails thee, Power propitious!
 Ripening in thy smile auspicious;
 Light divine! thy bounty streaming
 * Consecrates this desolate ground,
 On the vale thy lustre beaming,
 " Inspiration breathes around."
 The nobler pleasures of the moral world
 From this internal radiance flow,
 As when, oh Sun! thy summer-beams are bright,
 And Air, Earth, Ocean, all exulting glow.—
 Great Sun! with plenty ever blest these plains,
 Where Genius strikes the Lyre, and long-eyed Mercury
 reigns!

* It must be remembered, that this is a charitable as well as a poetic in-

(Continued.)

